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Via ECFS  
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to  
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

In the thirties, most rural areas in America had no electricity. The government stepped in with the "rural electrification project." That brought power to remote places everywhere, which included the places in Floyd County VA where my parents were born. Even so, it was 1955 before the electric lines arrived. For many years power was supplied by cooperatives, not big power companies. The same for the phone service. It was late getting to rural areas, and when it arrived, it was a cooperative among residents that brought it there. Floyd County's phone service is still provided by a cooperative.

Why am I boring you with this mini-history lesson? Because the internet is the new electric and phone service. If you change the rules to make sure the giant conglomerates rule the show, there's no way we in rural areas will benefit, because those giant companies will look at the sparse population areas and the distance between homes and rough terrain as a financial calculus and decide not to bother. It's already that way with our only landline phone provider, CenturyLink. They are known here as very unresponsive to customers and lackadasical about maintenance. (Not so of the electric provider, which is a cooperative.)

My business requires a decent internet connection. My local ISP does a pretty good job of providing that, given the challenges of my mountainous environment. And there's always someone kind and helpful at the other end of a phone call to help me, even with problems that are of my own making. I do not believe Verizon, for instance, will be so responsive, especially since they won't even fix their cell phone reception in this neck of the woods. (Called for help on that, their response was basically a yawn and "so what?")

The internet is not optional anymore. Rural areas in VA have gained NO jobs in the current recovery, and insufficient internet connections are part of the problems. Our local ISP is making great strides and a lot of investment in improving that, and I do not believe AT&T, Verizon or CenturyLink are going to care at all about us.

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